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ABSTRACT

Data collected via a Wisconsin statewide survey of randomly selected adults (N=548) were used to test the hypothesis that size of place is inversely related to community attachment in an ideational sense and that size of place has no clear association with participatory measures of attachment (i.e., contrary to the "linear development" perspective of Wirth and the "systemic" model of Janowitz and associates, differences in community attachment are regarded as more or less independent of social and family bonds). The variables employed were education, income, age, size of place of residence, length of residence, social participation with relatives, social participation with friends, organizational membership, community solidarity, and community satisfaction. Results indicated: rural residence was positively associated with dependent measures of community attachment; measures of participatory attachment to the community were not strongly correlated with community attachment; while age and length of residence were substantially intercorrelated, age had the major direct effect on both community solidarity and community satisfaction; and income had moderately low multivariate effects on attitudinal indicators of community attachment. (JC)

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SIZE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT:

A RECONSIDERATION*

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ABSTRACT

The literature on community attachment is reviewed, and the dichotomization of theoretical perspectives into "linear development" and "systemic" approaches is brought into question. It is argued that recent evidence on the deterioration of U.S. metropolitan areas and the emergence of net urban-to-rural migration casts doubt on the exhaustiveness of the "linear development" and "systemic" perspectives and warrants an empirical reconsideration of the relationships between size of place and community attachment. Rural residence proves to be positively associated with dependent measures of community attachment in a 1974 statewide Wisconsin survey. Measures of "participatory" attachment to the community, however, are not strongly correlated with community attachment. The conclusion summarizes the development of the community attachment literature and details the implications of the results for future research.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a long intellectual tradition in American social science which regards large, densely populated cities as fostering "social pathology," "social disorganization," "anomie," and a variety of other social ills (see for example, Carstairs, 1969; Faris and Dunham, 1939, for some specific empirical studies, and Michelson, 1970, for a theoretical discussion.) This tradition has been nurtured by seminal contributions of classical theorists (Simmel, 1957; Toennies, 1957), popular American values (White and White, 1961: Hadden and Barton, 1973), and the influence of the famous sociologist Louis Wirth (1964). Indeed, the apparent disorder, turmoil, and disorganization characteristic of U.S. cities during the early decades of the twentieth century furnished variants of "geneinschaft-gesellschaft" and "urbanism as a way of life" theories with a compelling logic. Urban life obviously differed greatly from rural life, and it appeared the rural-urban "typological tradition" (McKinney and Loomis, 1961) had accurately captured the essence of the ongoing forces of urbanization and industrialization.

Although certain of Wirth's Chicago colleagues — Thomas, Park, and Burgess — did not totally embrace his conceptions of the nature of twentieth century urban life (see Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974:328-329), the persuasiveness of the Wirth theoretical system did not appreciably decline until the 1950's (despite Whyte's, 1943, critique). One of the first major applications of an emerging empirical sociology was to employ sample survey techniques to test the applicability of the rural-urban typological tradition. The empirical studies of Axelrod (1957), Greer (1956), and Bell and Boat (1957), along with the theoretical work of Janowitz (1951), were decisive studies in undermining the notion that cities inherently foster a weakening of community solidarity, a predominance of

"secondary" group contacts over "primary" ones, and a dissolution of kinship bonds; rural-urban differences in these measures of "community attachment" were meager, contrary to Wirth's expectations.

The image of urbanism as articulated by Wirth failed to be supported by the evidence, and a polite, but firm, debunking of Wirth has become the typical pattern in textbooks, journal articles, and monographs dealing with urbanization, industrialization, or community studies (see, for example, Gans, 1968; Reissman, 1964; Suttles, 1972; Poplin, 1972; Dewey, 1963; Hawley, 1971). As Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965:129) argue:

> With striking consistency the recent studies of urban life underscore the nuclear family as the basic area of involvement for all type of urban populations. We do not find a madly mobile, restless mass, desintegrating for want of intimate ties, but an almost bucolic contentment with the narrow circle of kin and close friends, with the typical urbanite spending most of his leisure with the family at home, caring for the children, watching television, maintain the home, reading.

American social science thus moved toward a consensus that while Wirth's observations of early twentieth century American cities might be descriptively accurate, cities do not necessarily doom their residents to life as an "isolated mass."

REVIEW OF THEORY AND RESEARCH

Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) have recently added a theoretical and empirical codification to the debate over Wirth's notion of urbanism as a way of life. Kasarda and Janowitz detail two ideal-typical perspectives on community attachment in "mass society"— the "linear development" model of Wirth and Toennies, and a "systemic model" derived from the work of Park, Burgess, Thomas and others.[1] They find substantial empirical support for the systemic model among a sample of British survey respondents and argue that Wirth's observations of

a lack of social integration of immigrants into the Chicago community system are colored by the rather unique character of the 1920-1940 Chicago social structure.

Briefly, the linear development model presumes that urban life is decisively shaped by the large population, high population density, and high social heterogeneity of cities. These attributes, according to the linear development model of community attachment, lead to "a substitution of secondary for primary contacts, a weakening of the bonds of kinship, and a declining social significance of the local community" (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974:328). The systemic model posits that the urban community remains an integral aspect of social solidarity in "mass," urbanized societies. But since mass societies are mobile societies, with persons often being uprooted from their communities in search of employment, education, and so on, there are variations in the extent to which persons experience solidary relations within the urban community. The "community of limited liability," (Janowitz, 1951) then, aptly characterizes the systemic model's image of the urban community. Urbanites thus develop extensive participation in and attachment to a community as long as they reside there, "yet [are] prepared to leave these communities if local conditions fail to satisfy their immediate needs or aspirations" (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974:329).

Kasarda and Janowitz therefore argue that the explanatory abilities of the linear development and systemic models may be evaluated by the extent to which population size and density, versus length of residence, explain variation in dependent measures of primary group participation and community attachment. Their data clearly show that length of residence is a better predictor of relevant dependent variables than population size or density. They then suggest

that Wirth failed to "control for" length of residence in his Chicago urban sociology studies; immigrants that were poorly integrated into the community structure likely exhibited greater community attachment as their tenure in the urban community persisted.

FURTHER ISSUES IN COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT IN "MASS SOCIETY"

We feel that despite the rigor of Kasarda and Janowitz's investigation of community attachment, certain theoretical and empirical issues remain unsettled. First, the linear development and systemic theories of community attachment do not necessarily exhaust the set of available perspectives. Secondly, the Kasarda and Janowitz data was British data, not strictly randomly sampled (London was excluded from the sampling deign), and measurement was unsophisticated (despite the skillful use of Goodman's modified regression technique for nominal variables.) Therefore, an empirical assessment of community attachment seems warranted.

A neglected theory of urban (in relation to rural) community attachment in U.S. society, we argue, is based on the assumption that patterns of urbanization, urban structure, and urban decay are largely shaped by the imperatives of private capital accumulation (see, for example, Hill, 1975). Both liberal (Turner, 1972: Chapter 1) and radical (Bookchin, 1974; O'Connor, 1973: Chapter 5) observers have recognized accelerated urban decay and attributed this phenomenon to the exigencies of private enterprises maximizing profits and product consumption (markets). This accords with the observations of demographers and other social scientists interested in residential preferences and urban-to-rural migration (Hansen, 1970:246; Fuguitt and Zuiches, 1975), that a majority of Americans residing in cities 500,000 or larger prefer to live in a non-central city

area; also, preferences for small town and rural residence have increased during the past decade. These increases in small town and rural residential preferences appear to coincide with decreases in the quality of urban life, and a hypothesis of linkage is not implausible.

Thus, it would appear that the "systemic" model of community attachment might well be as "temperocentric" as its "linear development" counterpart. As Janowitz and Kasarda were performing their research, large cities in the U.S. were rapidly decaying in terms of substandard housing, unemployment, poverty, fiscal crisis, environmental degradation, and so on. While we have no reason to doubt their contention that urban dwellers continue to adapt to life in large cities with increasing years of residence, we suggest that the multitude of reinforcing factors which have contributed to the social and physical decay of the American city during the past decade (see Bookchin, 1974; Cloward and Piven, 1975) have overshadowed the ability of human beings to "automatically" adapt to such conditions (see also Green, 1973; Milgram, 1970).

The data of the present study — recent sample survey data — cannot of course definatively assess the emerging decadence of large U.S. metropolitan areas in recent years. Nevertheless, we suggest that these trends cannot be ignored; nor can we account for the appearance of net urban-to-rural migration since 1970 as an accidental phenomenon unconnected to the dynamics of decay in the urban political economy. These features of possible influences on contemporary rural-urban patterns of community attachment warrant a reconsideration of the size of place and community attachment issue, while reminding us of the pitfalls of uncritically advancing cross-sectional research results in the form of generalizations which hold in all times and places. In doing so we hypothesize that size of place is inversely related to community attachment in an ideational sense, and that size of place has no clear association with participatory measures of attachment.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

In this study we consider two clusters of dependent measures of community attachment — attitudinal measures of community solidarity and satisfaction, and social and organizational participation indicators. While the attitudinal measures are most crucial to our contentions regarding historic deterioration of U.S. metropolitan places, participation indicators are also included to assess whether the "systemic" model — and its major causal variable, length or residence — is still relevant in accounting for participatory community attachment in American communities. Nevertheless, we have implicitly posited above that residents of large, urban places might well participate as frequently as their rural counterparts with respect to social participation, yet express feelings of lack of community solidarity and dissatisfaction with the community.

Our guiding hypothesis, then, is that there are rural-urban differences in attitudinal indicators of community attachment, but that these attitudinal differences are not explicable in terms of corresponding rural-urban differences in social and organizational participation. In other words, differences in community attachment are regarded to be more-or-less independent of social and family bonds, contrary to both the "linear development" perspective of Wirth and the "systemic" model of Janowitz and his colleagues.

A zero-order correlation analysis of the variables in this study is followed by an examination of multivariate equations assessing the impacts of size of place of residence, length of residence, and relevant control variables (education, income, and age) on attitudinal and participation indicators of community attachment. Education, income, and age were selected as control variables following Janowitz and Kasarda's arguments that size of place and length of residence are somewhat intercorrelated with both community attachment indicators and theoretically important antecedent variables. We then estimate the

direct effects of the previously mentioned antecedent variables, as well as indicators of social and organizational participation, on the dependent attitudinal measures of community solidarity and satisfaction.

DATA AND METHOD

Sample

The data for this study were collected by the Wisconsin Survey Research Laboratory in a statewide survey during the fall of 1974. A multi-stage probability sampling technique was employed. Selection of the respondent within the household was randomized by the use of selection tables. In this sample only adults 18 years of age or older were chosen as respondents. Housing units on military reservations and adults in institutions or group quarters were not included. There were 548 respondents.

Operationalization of Variables

Two attitudinal indicators, both measured as summated Likert scales, were chosen for this study. The first such indicator, which we term community solidarity, is based on Fessler's (1952) work. The scale has four component items, each measured with a five-point Likert format ("strongly agree," and so on): "I feel free to stop by and visit with most people in this neighborhood." "I know the people living around here quite well." I feel at home almost anywhere in this community." "Most of the time I do not really feel like a member of this community." The scoring of the last item was reversed to allow summation of the respondent's item scores. The community satisfaction scale contains four items measured with a seven-point Likert-type format ("completely satisfied," "very satisfied," and so on): "How satisfied are you with this neighborhood as a place to live?" "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this (house, apartment)?" "How sat-

isfied are you with (name city--or if R lives in rural open country, name county) as a place to live in?" "In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the environment around here--the land, woodland, water, air, quietness, and scenery?" Both scales exhibited Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Bohrnstedt, 1969) in excess of .750 so that we may place faith in the reliability of the scales. Missing data on a given item were assigned the appropriate sample mean.

The social participation variables were measured with direct questions asking for how often the respondent talks with friends in the county, or "any of your relatives," either in person or by telephone. For each participation variable--participation with friends and participation with relatives--the responses were assigned numerical scores as follows: "daily," four; "several times a week," three; "once every week or so," two; and "once every month or two" and "less often," one. Missing data were assigned the median category score in each case. Organizational membership was operationalized as the exact number of voluntary associations respondents mentioned in response to a direct question asking which organizations they belonged to. Respondents with seven or more memberships were assigned a score of seven, producing a sample mean of 0.9.

Age, education, and total family income were measured with direct questions asking for the respondent's exact age in years, last year of formal schooling completed, and the income for all household members during the previous year (1973). Age was scored in terms of the respondent's exact age, and missing data were assigned the sample mean (44.0). Education was operationalized as the exact number of years of schooling completed. Respondents with Ph.D., M.D. and equivalent degrees were given an arbitrary score of 20; college graduates were assigned a score of 16; persons with four or more years of college, but who did not graduate were assigned a score of 15; and missing data were given

the sample mean (11.8). Respondents were asked to chose among 13 income categories, the highest category being $25,000 or more. Respondents were assigned a score corresponding with the midpoint of the income category chosen, with the upper, open-ended category arbitrarily assigned the value of 30,000. Missing data were given the sample mean (12,548).

Place of residence was determined from addresses and census materials for 1970. Scores of six were assigned to persons living in cities of 100,000 residents or larger; 50,000-99,999, five; 10,000-49,999, four; 2500-9999, three; name place (less than 2500), two; and rural (open country) residents were assigned a score of one. There were no missing data. Length of residence was measured by a direct question asking the respondents how long they had lived in their present residence. Persons replying less than one year were assigned a score of one; one to five years, two; six to 10 years, three; 11 to 15 years, four; 16-20 years, five; 21-25 years, six; 26-30 years, seven; and 31 years of greater, eight.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents zero-order correlation coefficients for the relationships among the attitudinal indicators of community attachment, the participatory attachment indicators, and relevant antecedent variables. Taking first the community solidarity and community satisfaction dependent measures, we note

[Table 1 about here]

that size of place of residence is negatively correlated with both attitudinal measures of community attachment. Size of place has a moderately large, negative zero-order correlation with community solidarity ($r = -.336$), and a somewhat weaker correlation with community satisfaction ($r = -.277$). The fact that, at the bivariate level at least, rural and small town residents express feelings of community solidarity and satisfaction more often than

their large city counterparts, accords with the hypotheses of the present study. However, length of residence exhibits positive bivariate relationships with community solidarity and community satisfaction, coinciding with Kasarda and Janowitz's theoretical notions and research results (r = .247 and .277, respectively). Age is also consistently and positively related to solidarity and satisfaction with community (r = .282 and .268, respectively). As would be expected, age and length of residence and age are substantially intercorrelated (r = .557), and multivariate analysis is clearly necessary to establish whether place of residence, length of residence, or perhaps age has the largest direct effect in predicting community solidarity and community satisfaction.

The data in Table 1 do suggest, however, that previous theorists' assumptions that participatory indicators of community attachment are strongly associated with attitudinal dimensions of attachment are empirically untenable. Social participation with friends and social participation with relatives have no bivariate relationships with either community solidarity or community satisfaction. Organizational membership does have meager, but statistically significant, zero-order correlations with solidarity (r = .125) and satisfaction (r = .141). Nevertheless, Table 1 shows that organizational membership is more substantially correlated with age and length of residence (r = .188 and .186, respectively), suggesting the possibility that the bivariate relations among organizational membership, community solidarity, and community satisfaction might well be spurious. Again, multivariate analysis is dictated, and we now move to a preliminary examination of the effects of age, education, income, size of place of residence, and length of residence on the two groups of community attachment indicators.

Table 2 reports standardized partial regression coefficients for

the regression of community solidarity, community satisfaction, social participation with relatives, social participation with friends, and organizational membership on the five independent variables. Looking first at the predictors of community solidarity, we see that size of place of residence continues to have the largest impact on solidarity ($b^* = -.305$), supporting the relevant hypothesis. Length of residence

[Table 2 about here]

has no discernible impact on community solidarity, while age has a substantial multivariate impact ($b^* = .256$). The structuring of community satisfaction is virtually identical, with size of place of residence ($b^* = -.254$) and age ($b^* = .323$) having substantial direct effects, and length of residence having little multivariate impact. Family income has small, but statistically significant, effects on both solidarity and satisfaction. This suggests that wealthy families might well be able to locate in more desirable communities and therefore express generally high feelings of community attachment.

None of the five independent variables has a statistically significant direct effect on either social participation with friends or social participation with relatives (see Table 2). Age proves to be the best predictor of organizational membership, followed by educational and income rank. Neither size of place of residence nor length of residence has any large multivariate association with organizational membership.

To investigate more concretely the nature of the interrelations among community attachment as measured by social and organizational participation, and attitudes of community solidarity and community satisfaction, we have computed the regression equations summarized in Table 3. Again, we note that social participation with friends and relatives and organ-

izational membership have no substantial direct effect on either community solidarity or community satisfaction. Size of place of residence

[Table 3 about here]

continues to have moderately large, inverse direct effects on both solidarity and satisfaction ($b^* = -.308$ and $-.251$, respectively), while length of residence has no multivariate association with either dependent variable. Age and income also have significant net effects on both dependent measures, as in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

The sociological literature on community attachment in U.S. society has taken many turns, and we might note in a sociology of knowledge sense that new directions in this literature have rather faithfully reflected major social changes in the tenor of urban life. As noted earlier, the period during which major American cities were undergoing massive influxes of black and European migrants--along with labor violence and inter-ethnic hostilities--reinforced the classical sociological viewpoints of Simmel and Toennies. Many spoke of "urbanism as a way of life" in such a way that cities would inherently foster a weakening of social, familial, and community bonds. While most observers accepted the fact that large cities were here to stay, many sociologists could not help comparing urban "social pathology" with the presumed social and communal solidarity of rural areas (Mills, 1963).

As the close of World War II brought some stability to ethnic influxes into U.S. cities, the American metropolis experienced nearly two decades of steady economic expansion and a muting of social antagonisms in the city. It appeared that the rapid social changes that had unleashed the turmoil and disorder of earlier decades were essentially complete, and

urban residents were viewed to be increasingly integrating themselves into social, familial, and communal relationships. The "new urban sociology" did find expressions of community within the mobile, urban U.S. society. The notion that urbanization leads to social pathologies of various sorts was rejected in favor of the notion that opportunities were still available to urban man to stake out community within the vast metropolis.

However, the urban racial rebellions beginning in the mid-1960s were the beginning of several trends which undermined the optimism of many observers of American urban life. The out-migration of affluent whites and their capital to the suburbs, declining inner city tax bases, environmental problems, urban decay and other related phenomena were beginning to dominate the metropolitan landscape. Many large cities were even losing population as those who could afford to sought to escape the city.

The present study has reviewed the two major perspectives on the structuring of community attachment--the linear development and systemic perspectives--and argued that each was based on and restricted to specific periods in American urban development. It was suggested that the recent trends of urban decay might well be manifest in major rural-urban differences in feelings of community attachment, solidarity, and satisfaction. Rural residents were found to express solidarity and satisfaction with their communities more than residents of large cities, in accordance with our hypothesis. Clearly, our data do not allow us to assess changes in such attitudes over the past several decades. However, our review of the relevant literature suggests an hypothesis of increased rural-urban differences in community attachment over past decades, and this is certainly an important topic for subsequent research

Our results also cast doubt on the notion that differences in social

and organizational participation have a major impact on feelings of community attachment--an assumption of importance to both the linear development and systemic perspectives. The systemic perspective's hypothesis that length of residence is a major factor in determining levels of community attachment received little support in our multivariate analysis. While age and length of residence are substantially intercorrelated, it was found that age has the major direct effect on both community solidarity and community satisfaction. While the strong impact of age on the attitudinal indicators of community attachment was originally unanticipated, we suggest that this finding might be accounted for by the young being more oriented toward geographical mobility than the elderly. Thus the young might generally have more options in selecting a community of residence and be more critical of their present community. Income also had moderately low multivariate effects on attitudinal indicators of community attachment, again suggesting that the well-to-do are best able to select desirable communities within which to live.

Although the results of this study cast doubt on the applicability of many notions about community attachment, it is painfully obvious that we have not been able to address many crucial issues pertaining to this field of inquiry. The profound social changes occurring in American metropolitan areas--and resulting impacts on urban-to-rural migration and population distribution--make the size of place and community attachment issue an important focus for future inquiry.

FOOTNOTES

1. The "linear development" perspective has been termed as such by Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) because they argue Wirth and his colleagues presumed that progressive, linear advances in urbanization would create the various consequences he detailed as "urbanism as a way of life" (Wirth, 1964). Kasarda and Janowitz term their perspective a "systemic" one since they generally prefer to view the urban community as a system of institutions and social groups which adapts to ongoing social changes.

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TABLE 1: Zero-Order Correlation Coefficients for the Relationships Among Selected Variables, Total Sample (N = 548).

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Community solidarity	Community satisfaction	Social Participation with relatives	Social Participation with friends	Organizational membership
Education	-.069	-.040	-.008	-.026	.186*
Income	.075	.110*	-.035	-.021	.198*
Age	.282*	.268*	.039	.038	.188*
Size of place of residence	-.336*	-.277*	.034	.064	-.046
Length of residence	.247*	.277*	.042	.048	.186*
Social participation with relatives	-.021	-.031	--	--	--
Social participation with friends in community	.047	-.030	--	--	--
Organizational membership	.125*	.141*	--	--	--

*Indicates the zero-order correltaion coefficient is statistically significant at the .05 level or beyond, with a two-tailed test of significance.

TABLE 2: Standardized Partial Regression Coefficients for the Regression of Selected Dependent Variables on Education, Income, Age, Size of Place of Residence, and Length of Residence, Among the Total Sample.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable				
	Community Solidarity	Community Satisfaction	Social Participation with Relatives	Social Participation with Friends	Organizational Membership
Education	.044	.065	.020	-.011	.290*
Income	.107*	.149*	-.035	-.013	.167*
Age	.256*	.323*	.022	.009	.311*
Size of place of residence	-.305*	-.254*	.039	.072	-.022
Length of residence	.078	-.028	.038	.050	.075
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	.199	.166	.004	.008	.161

*Absolute value of the coefficient is at least twice as large as the standard error.

TABLE 3: Standardized Partial Regression Coefficients for the Regression of Community Solidarity and Community Satisfaction on Selected Independent Variables, Total Sample.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Community Solidarity	Dependent Variable: Community Satisfaction
Education	.039	.054
Income	.103*	.142*
Age	.249*	.312*
Size of place of residence	-.308*	-.251*
Length of residence	.075	-.029
Social participation with relatives	-.032	-.023
Social participation with friends in community	.065	-.014
Organizational membership	.021	.037
Coefficient of determination (R^2)	.204	.168

*Absolute value of the coefficient is at least twice as large as the standard error.